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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 002289

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [SL](#) [NI](#) [UNAMSIL](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NSA MOHAMMED ON HUMANITRIAN ASSISTANCE  
AND UNAMSIL ROTATION UPDATE

REF: A. STATE 143583

[B](#). ABUJA 2117

[C](#). STATE 151930

[D](#). ABUJA 2218

[E](#). ABUJA NI 2287

[F](#). ABUJA 2286

Classified by CDA Andrews; Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) CDA Andrews called on NSA Aliyu Mohammed on 12 September. Mohammed echoed the words of President Obasanjo regarding the terrorist attacks against the United States (Ref F), and offered any and all assistance to locating the perpetrators and bringing them to justice. Andrews thanked the NSA for the quick reaction of the Nigerian security establishment to protect the Embassy and American lives and property in Nigeria.

[1](#)2. (U) Andrews provided the NSA a briefing on the trip to Kano and Jigawa States using OFR helicopters, and informed the NSA that we expected an OFDA team in the following days, assuming they did not have pressing duties in the United States. Mohammed thanked the Embassy profusely for the goodwill gesture, noted he had informed both the President and the Vice President of the Embassy's efforts and stated that the OFDA team would be welcome, if they were able to come.

[1](#)3. (C) Andrews noted the Embassy had received a letter from the Senate President and the Speaker of the House requesting an MPRI program to enhance the oversight capabilities of the National Assembly Defense Committees. (COMMENT: Both the NSA and President had previously expressed reservation about MPRI working with the National Assembly. END COMMENT.) Andrews noted that, since Nigeria was a democracy, the Embassy could not "lightly set aside" such a request when signed by the presiding officers of both houses. Mohammed replied that he was an early supporter of the MPRI program, and said he would discuss the Assembly's request with Senate President Anyim that afternoon, and ask the Assembly leaders to also discuss their interest in MPRI with President Obasanjo.

[1](#)4. (C) Andrews informed the NSA of recent discussions of UNAMSIL troop rotations, including the initial request to keep one Nigerian battalion in Sierra Leone until January (Ref A) and the President's decision to support the request (Ref B). Andrews also told the NSA of the subsequent request made to the Acting Minister of Defense that one Nigerian battalion be replaced by a Senegalese OFR-trained battalion (Ref C and D). Finally, Andrews explained that we understood that the Army had not received new orders and was proceeding on its original orders (Ref E), which caused us some concern. Mohammed asked that the Embassy work with his Military Advisor LTC Idris to resolve the matter. (NOTE: CDA sent LTC Idris a letter, at his urging, explaining in detail the requested rotation changes. END NOTE.)

[1](#)5. (C) After returning from the meeting, PolMilOff spoke with Balarabe Lawal, SA to the Army Minister (Batagarawa is seized with a visit of the Chinese Defense Minister). Lawal stated that Minister Danjuma himself had approved the rotation changes when checking in with his office during his leave. Lawal then checked with the Personal Staff Officer to the Minister, at PolMilOff's urging, to confirm that the Army had been informed. Lawal reported that the Army had not been informed, and that Chief of Defense Staff VADM Ibrahim Ogohi had also sent a letter on the rotations. The decision was being held in abeyance until the Minister could consider all of the information received. COMMENT: We assume this means that Ogohi is again creating obstacles. END COMMENT.

[1](#)6. (C) DATT COMMENT: According to Colonel Operations, Colonel Kaka, as of 12SEP01 1300, the Army was proceeding on the original schedule, i.e. rotation of two Nigerian battalions on 17 September. END DATT COMMENT.

17. (U) Freetown minimize considered.  
Andrews